

## **Historic, archived document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



667  
S

# THINK IT OVER

LIBRARY  
RECEIVED  
★ FEB 21 1934  
U. S. Department of Agriculture



F-221682

REGIONAL  
FORESTER



Eastern  
National Forest  
Region

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1930

M-5121

8-7219

# THINK IT OVER

## *FIRE IS AN OUTLAW IN THE WOODS*

In the wake of fire stalks death and damage. Sometimes the damage is not easily seen, but it is there just the same. It is quite possible that lack of knowledge of the very real injury which follows fire in the woods may partly account for so much carelessness with fire. People are usually careful when they realize that a thoughtless act may burn up their property. No person in his right mind will light his pipe in the barn and flip the burning match in the fodder bin or hay-mow. Why? His hand is stayed by the thought of fire and the damage it will cause. Yet, that same person may without thinking flip another match into dry grass or leaves and start a forest fire that will do damage greater than the value of a thousand barns. What is true of the unthinking smoker is true of the man with the camp fire, the burner of brush, or of anyone else who uses fire in or near the forest.

So that you may stop and think and then be careful with fire in the woods, the following summary of the evidence against fire is given to you.

### *REAL DAMAGES FROM FOREST FIRES*

#### INJURY TO:

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Soil   | 3. Water     |
| 2. Timber | 4. Wild life |
| 5. Beauty |              |

*Think of These Injuries  
One by One*



## SOIL

Nearly all forest fires burn on the ground. Each fire burns up more or less of the decaying vegetable matter, called "humus," vital to the tree, shrub, and herb life which the soil supports. It destroys a large part of the plant food and there is left only an unbalanced ration.



F—238950

### *Plant Life Starves and Sickens*

At the same time fire removes the organic matter which works in the upper layers of the soil and changes it into a sponge-like cover preventing soil and water from washing away or drying up.

### *Soil Texture Is Ruined*

Loss of soil fertility is the heaviest toll the forest fire takes. Other losses may be replaced in time at reasonable cost, but the plant food in the soil can be built back only by nature, and her work is very slow.

### *Erosion*

When the protective forest cover is destroyed by fire, rainstorms wash away the valuable top soil, gullies form on steep slopes, silt and débris are washed down to clog the streams and damage fertile farm lands in the valleys.





F—40117 A

## TIMBER

### *Each Forest Fire Destroys Trees*

Even the lightest fire destroys some trees and damages others. The average forest fire kills most of the trees up to one inch in diameter on the area burned. This represents about eight years of patient growth. Many large trees are killed, but the younger the timber the higher the death rate.



F—200489

The community of trees which we call the forest is like the community of persons which we call the human race. If we kill off the children what is the future of the human race? If we burn up the little trees what is to become of the forest? The answer is simple.

Some day, not so far off, we will have a costly task of planting trees on worn-out soil and trying to make them grow. If we banish forest fire Mother Nature will gladly do this for us.



To all of this we must add the damage to big trees that have struggled through scorching flames, with



F—167220

scarred trunks, loss of leaves, injured roots, as well as the loss in slower growth and in merchantable value of the grown-up tree.



F—230842

## WATER

Controlled water supply is a necessity of life.

Tree growth helps to control the flow of water in many ways:

- (a) It checks the beating effect of rain on the soil.
- (b) It slows up the melting of the snows.
- (c) The spongy “humus” soil covering absorbs moisture and holds back the run-off.



The effect of all these things working together might be seen this way:

Take a bare table and tip it up at an angle. Pour a cup of water on the table top. It runs right off.



F—201651

Now put a blanket on the tipped table top and pour another cup. The water soaks in and works its way down.

### *FIRE DESTROYS THE BLANKET*

## *WILD LIFE*

### *Forest Fires and Wild Life Do Not Get Along Together*

Many furred and feathered creatures perish in each blaze. If the grown-ups get away, the helpless young



F—229105

are caught. The game birds with ground-nesting habits are heavy losers. Food and shelter for animals and birds are both consumed in the forest fire.

After repeated fires—

Game leaves the country.

Fish life is endangered.



Stream shade is removed.

Insect and plant fish food is destroyed by ashes washed down from burned hillsides.

Streams lose their beauty.

Wild flowers are killed.



F—216907

Hunting in burned woods is poor. Game is scarce; dogs track poorly; charred brush and trees make nasty going; thickets of thorns and briers spring up.

Fire is destructive to game and fish and so ruins the sport of hunting and fishing.



F—211709

## BEAUTY

### *No Beauty Results From a Forest Fire*

Charred trees, blackened hillsides, fallen timber, all make a sorry sight. The flowering shrubs and herbs of the woods disappear. In the path of the forest fire we have blackened waste, desolation.

In a land justly noted for its beauty, there is no place for a forest fire.



## SUMMARY

THE REAL DAMAGES FROM FOREST FIRE  
ARE TO:

1. Soil
2. Timber
3. Water
4. Wild life
5. Beauty



F—211644

## *PREVENT FIRE IN THE FOREST*

### *FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE RULES*

1. MATCHES. Be sure your match is out. Break it in two before throwing it away.

2. TOBACCO. Throw pipe ashes and cigar or cigarette stumps in the dust of the road and stamp out any fire. Do not throw them into brush, leaves, or needles.

3. MAKING CAMP. Build only a small camp fire. Build it in the open, not against a tree or log or near brush. Scrape away the trash from around it.

4. LEAVING CAMP. Never break camp until the camp fire is out—dead out.

5. PUTTING OUT A CAMP FIRE. Stir the coals while soaking them with water; turn small sticks and drench both sides; wet the ground around the fire. If water is not obtainable, stir in earth and tread it down until packed tight over and around the fire. Be sure the last spark is dead.

6. BRUSH OR CLEARING FIRES. Never build brush or clearing fires in windy weather or when there is the slightest danger of their escaping from control.

*FIRE IS AN OUTLAW IN THE FOREST*  
*THINK IT OVER*